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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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news

ART TATE, Assistant Director, University Relations
Office: (217) 581-5981 - Home: (217) 348-7553

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRAINERS SUPPORT SPORTS PROGRAM

By Suzie Hampson
Student Hometown News Bureau

CHARLESTON, IL--One of the best things that ever happened to the sports program at Eastern Illinois University is the Athletic Training program which is administered by the College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

Eastern students begin in the Pre-Athletic Training program as a rookie. They receive initial instruction of the basic skills and observe for one semester, rotating between Eastern's three training facilities.

This gives students a better idea of what the program entails, said Debra Ervin-Sins, a student athletic trainer. "Being a trainer takes a lot of hours. You have to really want to be a trainer," she said.

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After the completion of the first semester, students may be promoted to the Clinical Phase of the program. This depends on their grade point average, their interest in the program and skills they have learned during their observation period.

Usually only about eight students from the 20-40 in the Pre-Athletic Training Program are promoted into the Athletic Training program.

"A majority of the students take themselves out of the program. Demands are high and most don't want to make the commitment," said Dennis Aten, head trainer for Eastern.

During the clinical phase, trainers are assigned to an intercollegiate team. The trainers are scheduled to watch practice and attend all the team's events. Sometimes they travel with the team, depending on the team's budget.

Trainers are usually at an event about two hours before, an hour after and work an additional five hours on Saturdays when needed, said Terry Marshall, a student trainer.

"Trainers put in a lot of hours. You really have to be dedicated," said Scott Chaney, another student trainer.

For most of the trainers, classes start at 8 a.m. and then they are in the training room working with athletes until late afternoon. "It's a full time job," said Chaney.

"The class work is hard. Not only do we learn what to

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use for the treatment of injuries, but, more importantly, we learn why we use a particular treatment," said Chaney.

Since the Athletic Training program is an option, rather than a major at Eastern, those in the program fulfill requirements of their major of study in addition to the requirements of this option. This permits placement flexibility to the relevant graduates, according to Dr. Carol Pyles, Dean, College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Most trainers at Eastern are Physical Education or Health Education majors.

After classes, the trainers put in anywhere from 18-30 hours a week; usually averaging around 20 hours.

To take the mandatory National Certification test, a student has to have a minimum of 1,200 hours of athletic training. This means trainers have to put in 300 hours a semester for four semesters.

However, students must first pass Eastern's exam to be recommended to take the national test. It is a written and practical test designed much like the national test to prepare the students. Although only 40 percent of those who take the national test pass the first time, said Aten, every Eastern student except one has passed the first time.

The trainers and Eastern's training program focuses on prevention of injuries. They do both pre-season and post-season testing on the athletes. They try to prevent as many injuries as possible, said Marshall.

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"A lot of people think we just tape athletes," said Marshall.
"We give the athletes more individual treatment at Eastern.
We are valuable to the athletes," said Marshall.

A lot of demands are put on Eastern trainers. "Aten
and the other faculty associated with the program have high
expectations and everyone tries to live up to those expectations,"
said Marshall.

"We ask for excellence from the students, and they also
have to respond to academics. It puts a lot of pressure on
the students, but they do a great job," said Aten.